

Message Text

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11

ACTION EA-09

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CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: PFOR, ASEAN, MY, RP

SUBJ: MALAYSIA, THE PHILIPPINES, AND THE TREATY OF AMITY AND
FRIENDSHIP

REF: KUALA LUMPUR 838 (DTG 130828Z FEB 76),

KUALA LUMPUR 959 (DTG 210510Z FEB 76) (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY. GOVT-INFLUENCED "NEW STRAITS TIMES" (NST)
HAS GIVEN UNUSUALLY DETAILED COVERAGE OF BALI SUMMIT
AS SEEN BY ITS CORRESPONDENTS. THRUST OF SPECIAL
ARTICLES IS TO PAINT MALAYSIA AS RESISTING AN UNREASONABLE
EFFORT BY FILIPINOS TO INCORPORATE COMPULSORY ARBITRATION
CLASE IN TREATY OF AMITY AND FREINDSHIP. ON EVE OF
SUMMIT, HOWEVER, NST QUOTES FOREIGN MINISTER RITHAUDDEEN
AS SAYING HE BELIEVES TREATY WOULD BE SIGNED. END SUMMARY.

2. ON EVE OF OPENING OF BALI ASEAN SUMMIT THE GOM
INFLUENCED "NEW STRAITS TIMES" (NST) HAS CARRIED
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UNUSUALLY EXTENSIVE AND DETAILED COMMENTARY ON

THE GOVERNMENT'S PROBLEMS WITH THE ARBITRATION
CLAUSE OF THE PROPOSED TREATY OF AMITY AND
FRIENDSHIP SCHEDULED TO BE SIGNED BY THE FIVE ASEAN
CHIEFS OF STATE. OVERALL TENOR OF ARTICLES MAINLY
AUTHORED BY NST'S NOORDIN/SOPIEE IS THAT PHILIPPINES
IS BEING OBSTRUCTIONIST IN PRESSING FOR INCORPORATION
OF A COMPULSORY ARBITRATION CLAUSE IN THE SECTION
DEVOTED TO RESOLUTION OF INTRA-REGIONAL DISPUTES
IN THE TREATY SINCE A COMPULSORY PROCEDURE
WOULD VIOLATE THE PRINCIPLE OF CONSENSUS THAT IS
THE BASIS FOR ALL ASEAN DECISION-MAKING. AFTER OUT-
LINING QUESTION ON FEB 20, SOPIEE REPORTED FROM
BALI FEB 21 THAT HARD NEGOTIATIONS WERE
UNDERWAY TO BREAK THE IMPASS, ALLUDING TO
SPECULATION FILIPINOS HAD TABLED THEIR PROPOSED
COMPULSORY ARBITRATION CLAUSE WITH A RESTRICTION
APPLYING THE CLAUSE ONLY TO FUTURE DISPUTES, "THUS
ALLAYING MALAYSIA'S FEAR THAT THE CLAUSE COULD BE
USED TO RAISE THE SABAH ISSUE AND EMBARRASS
MALAYSIA." IN SAME ARTICLE, SOPIEE REFERRED TO
FILIPINO "TABLE THUMPING" (NOT CONSIDERED

POLITE BY MALAYANS) AND ASKED RHETORICALLY
WHETHER THIS WAS NOT TACTICALLY MOTIVATED "SO THAT
PRESIDENT MARCOS CAN, ON ARRIVAL, STATESMANLIKELY (SIC)
INVOKE THE ASEAN SPIRIT AND BREAK THE GORDIAN KNOT."
SOPIEE ARTICLE, CO-AUTHORED WITH DAHARI ALI,
APPEARING ON FRONT PAGE OF TODAY'S (FEB 23)
NST, STATES IT NOW LOOKS LIKE AMITY TREATY WILL
BE CONCLUDED FEB 24. FOREIGN MINISTER RITHAUDDEEN
IS QUOTED AS SAYING "EVERYTHING HAS BEEN CLEARED
UP" AND THAT HE BELIEVED THE TREATY WOULD BE SIGNED.

3. COMMENT: WE HAVE NOT YET HAD A CHANCE TO DISCUSS
THE APPARENT REVERSAL OF ITS EARLIER COURSE WITH

ANYONE IN AUTHORITY, BUT WE PRESUME THAT THE
FOREIGN MINISTER AND HIS STAFF HAVE "ALLOWED"
THEMSELVES TO BE PERSUADED BY DATUK MALIK AND
HAVE MANAGED TO PERSUADE THE PRIME MINISTER AND
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GHAZALI SHAFIE TO AGREE TO SIGNING REVISED TREATY OF
AMITY AND FRIENDSHIP. SOPIEE, SON OF UMNO
MP MOHAMED SOPIEE AND A SELF-ACKNOWLEDGED
PUBLICIST/PROPAGANDIST ON BEHALF OF THE GOM,
WENT OUT OF HIS WAY TO ESTABLISH THAT THE PHILIPPINES
WERE MAKING AN UNACCEPTABLE INITIATIVE IN ADDING
LANGUAGE TO THE TREATY WHILE AVOIDING REFERENCE
TO PREVIOUS VOLTE FACE BY GOM ON THIS ISSUE

(SEE K.L. 838). HIS ARTICLES REPRESENT THE FIRST
EFFORT IN RECENT YEARS TO EXPLAIN AND INS AND OUTS
OF ASEAN NEGOTIATIONS IN ANY DETAIL. EVEN
THOUGH THEY ARE ALSO AN EXERCISE IN PSYCHOLOGICAL
WARFARE THE ARTICLES UNDERSCORE A TREND TOWARDS
GREATER OPENNESS IN THE PRESS HERE SINCE THE DEATH
OF THE FORMER PRIME MINISTER. COPIES OF THE
ARTICLES ARE BEING POUCHED TO EA/IMS AND
INR/DDR/REA.
UNDERHILL

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